(b) if so, whether this technique has been adopted for preservation of various type of fruits and vegetables in Himachal Pradesh;

(c) if so, the results thereof, and

(d) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Experimental tests on apples from Himachal Pradesh have been conducted and the results are encouraging. However, commercial application of this technology has not been taken up in Himachal Pradesh.

(c) and (d) Mango was the only fruit among the various food items approved for radiation preservation, under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act Rules 1955. However, recently a notification has been issued approving food irradiation on generic class basis. With this, commercial radiation processing of other fruits is now possible.

Shortage of Coal Washeries

†1830. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is shortage of coal washeries in the country;

(b) whether Government propose to enhance the number of coal washeries keeping in view the introduction of clean coal technology;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government propose to make it mandatory for captive coal mines to build washeries; and

(e) if so, by when the directions would be issued in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) Demand of washed coal is derived out of consumers' need of improved and consistent quality arising out of techno commercial requirement. Demand for coal is assessed in terms of raw coal whereas specific demand of consumers of washed coal is met from the washery capacity available with the coal companies or in the private sector.

(b) and (c) It has recently been decided that in order to supply improved quality and sized coal to the consumers, CIL would set up washeries under Build and Operate Scheme for supply of washed coal to all consumers other than pithead consumers. It has also been decided that all new open cast projects with capacity of more than 2.50 MTY and not linked to pithead consumers will have an integrated washery.

(d) and (e) At present there is no proposal to make it mandatory for captive coal mines to build washeries.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.